

The JOURNAL of LOUIS HÉMON

Translated by
**WILLIAM
ASPENWALL
BRADLEY**



THIS journal of the author of "Maria Chapdelaine" is vividly expressive of the emotions aroused in a finely sensitive Frenchman visiting for the first time the lost province of Quebec.

Hemon tells of his arrival by steamer at Quebec, gives his interpretation of the charm of the old city, and describes his journey on to Montreal and his impressions of the countryside and the people. He pictures in fresh colors the French of the Quebec Province in their staunch pride of race, and thrills to the epic of his people's triumph against exile and adversity.

These chapters have a special interest as a record of Hémon's experiences and impressions during the months in which he was gathering the material for his story of "Marie Chapdelaine."

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THE JOURNAL OF LOUIS HÉMON



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A TYPICAL BIT OF PÉRIBOUKA COUNTRY.

THE JOURNAL OF LOUIS HÉMON

TRANSLATED BY
WILLIAM ASPENWALL BRADLEY



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FROM LIVERPOOL TO QUEBEC

I

AT the office of the Allan Line, in Cockspur Street, a clerk presented the two horns of the dilemma in a concise and striking manner.

“To go to Montreal,” he said, “you have the choice between two of our services: that from Liverpool, and that from London and Le Havre. By Liverpool, the crossing takes seven days. On the Le Havre line there is French cooking and wine with the meals. The crossing takes thirteen days.”

For a professional investigator, notebook in hand, in search of easy generalizations, here was already a chance to establish a contrast between

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the essential haste of the Anglo-Saxons and the indolence of our compatriots who resign themselves very readily to crossing on an old boat, and devoting two weeks to it, provided they can eat in the French fashion and guzzle Medoc twice a day all the way to Montreal; but, after eight years of London, Anglo-French contrasts had lost their relief, and generalizations no longer seemed so easy or so sure. I thought only of weighing the pro and the con. Thirteen days at sea—it was tempting; but October was already advanced, and it would be good to have, on arriving, a few weeks to spare before the winter set in—that Canadian winter which one imagines so redoubtable at a distance. I therefore left from Liverpool, four days later.

Seven days at sea. A good sea, not rough enough to be bothersome, sufficiently so not to be insipid. Thus, few are sick, or at least few are frankly sick; but quite a number, upset by apprehension, keep, throughout this week, the curiously greenish complexion of those who are

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anxious, or else descend jauntily in the morning to the saloon, play with an egg or a bowl of gruel, and go back to the deck without waiting for the end of the meal. Oh! without precipitation, with dignity; but turning their quivering nostrils away from the victuals, and dropping some ingenious pretext to their table-companions.

All sorts of passengers: not a few Canadians who have spent the summer in England and are now returning; several young Englishmen who are crossing for the first time, sent by their business houses; and a handful of others who have left at a venture, and although it is the bad season. Among these last, a subtle bond seems to establish itself. They gauge each other furtively, and think: "Has that chap a better chance to succeed than I? How much money has he in his pocket?" That is to say, how long will he be able to wait, if he has to wait, before going hungry? And they note the shape of his shoulders and the expression of his face, half fraternally, half as rivals: "If that flat-

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chested clerk does not find the work he wants, will he measure up to the work he does find?"

For the optimism which, all told, is general among them, is of the most reasonable sort. Scarcely any are seen who imagine they are going to a magnificent Eldorado whence they will be able to return, after very few years, to live in ease at home. They hope, evidently, to succeed better there than in England, since they have left; but they are aware, also, that they will find a sterner struggle, a much harder climate, and, above all, that atmosphere of simple cruelty characteristic of a young country which is forging ahead and has hardly time to stop to pity and help those who fall by the way, having failed.

Thus one of them, who has been able to equip himself amply, pay his second-class passage and still keep a few pounds in his pocket, has, nevertheless, from time to time, several minutes of anxiety. Installed on the deck in his steamer-



A MONK OF THE TRAPPIST ORDER FROM THE MISTASSINI MONASTERY ROAD-MAKING.

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chair, he watches the long, monotonous roll of the Atlantic, and thinks:

“There are not more than three or four of us on this boat who have set out at a venture. It is the bad season . . . the bad season . . .” And he seeks to estimate, as nearly as possible, all the “x’s” of the problem: the cold of the coming winter—the real, intense cold which he does not yet know—the conditions of life and of work in this new country, his chances of finding at once, or almost at once, a living wage.

Phrases from the official booklets on emigration come back to him . . . “Agricultural workers and artisans are those who should go to Canada, and the only ones sure to succeed . . . Men practising liberal professions, clerks, etc. . . . etc. . . . would be wrong to emigrate.” There are artisans and peasants on this boat, but travelling third-class. They will find work as soon as they land, and have not the slightest reason for anxiety. The

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man belonging to one of those diverse classes "who would be wrong to emigrate," is, on the contrary, prey to a disquietude. He gets up and goes to join other passengers who are not making their first trip, to ask them for an indirect encouragement.

He questions negligently: "Had you something in view when you crossed the first time?"

One of them replies: "Yes." Another says: "No . . . but it was spring. Now it's the bad season, you see!"

The bad season. . . . There is no more discouraging expression; and the silhouette of the continent we are approaching—a silhouette contemplated so often on the maps that it is automatically visualized when thought of—assumes a menacing, hostile aspect. All the young men who "would be wrong to emigrate," and who have, nevertheless, emigrated, strive to imagine some of the rigours awaiting them. They pass in review all the different trades they believe themselves capable of practising at a pinch; and they

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end by saying to themselves that they will “muddle through” all right, and by wrapping themselves comfortably in their rugs to enjoy fully what they are sure of: half a week longer of comfort, with four square meals a day, which appears important and precious at the approach of all this uncertainty.

Others have no sort of anxiety. They are those who are not going to Canada to succeed, but simply to travel and to see something they have not yet seen. They are not anxious, because what happens to them will necessarily be something new, and consequently welcome.

Five days out of Liverpool, a thick fog descends upon the sea, and it begins to be cold. One of the ship’s officers explains that it is the wind from Labrador; and, for those of the passengers who are making their first trip, this name of “Labrador” in itself seems to make the temperature fall several degrees lower still.

We shall pass too far from Newfoundland to see the coast, nor shall we pass any icebergs;

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for at this season they have already passed, drifting majestically to the south, throughout the summer months, melting a little every day: a pilgrimage which is also a sort of slow suicide. . . .

The first land sighted is, therefore, the island of Anticosti. As a good Frenchman, I have always made it a point of honour to know a little of the geography of those countries only where I have travelled. Accordingly, I was altogether ignorant of the existence of this island which has, however, several titles to glory. In the first place, it is just about the size of Corsica; and, as a matter of fact, where does it get this Italian-sounding name? But, above all, it belongs to M. Henri Menier.

The dynasty of the chocolate manufacturers has shown itself infinitely more modern and more prudent than that of the sugar-refiners in its territorial acquisitions. M. Menier has not had to occupy Anticosti by main force. He has been satisfied to purchase it. I do not know the



A "CABANE" ON THE ROAD TO PÉRIBOUKA. HUNDREDS OF THESE LOG SHELTERS OF THE MOST PRIMITIVE KIND ABOUND IN QUEBEC.

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price; but, given the dimensions of this patch of ground, the square meter must have cost him very little. He comes here fairly regularly in his yacht, during the summer. Anticosti remains, naturally, a part of the Canadian territory and is, therefore, indirectly a British dependency; but a landowner's powers are vast, and the legend runs that M. Menier has turned his island into a little Franco-Canadian colony from which English-speaking people are politely excluded. He has installed in it lumbering operations and several other industries, and comes like a czar, when it pleases him, to live several weeks among his good people, and to hunt the bear and the caribou.

Only—the eternal lesson of humility—the infinitely great, financially and territorially speaking, is prey to the persecutions of the infinitely small. The illustrious chocolate-maker carries on, year after year, an unsuccessful and hopeless struggle against the mosquitoes, which are the scourge of the damp, wooded

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regions during the warm season; and mosquito-nettings, gauze veils, divers lotions destined to inspire the mosquitoes with disgust for human flesh, scarcely succeed in rendering supportable the master of Anticosti's sojourn on his estates.

All we see of his island is an interminable coast, low, brown, distant, which the fog reveals and conceals, as if playing a game. Then when, towards evening, the fog lifts, we perceive that this coast has disappeared, and we seem to be at open sea. Only, the sight of this first trans-Atlantic land, and the memory of the often consulted maps, makes us almost feel the proximity of the two shores of the Gulf of Saint Lawrence—shores which are always out of sight, but which close in upon us hourly.

Next morning when, leaving stifling cabins, we go up on deck for a little breath before breakfast, one of these shores has become visible and, in a few hours, we come to skirt it quite close.

It is flat and bare at the water's level; but

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very soon hills appear in the interior, and their line draws nearer. The somewhat misty atmosphere lends them a factitious majesty, and shreds of clouds, hanging halfway up their sides, complacently exaggerate their height, which is only moderate; but it would not take so much to rivet the attention of the passengers, who are now all on deck and looking with a sort of candid interest. The least land takes on a striking relief, after a week on the water; but what marks this land with a moving grandeur in our eyes is, above all, the fact that it is the Canadian land, the outpost of the continent towards which we were bound. A coast with exactly the same silhouette, seen somewhere in Europe, in the Baltic or the Black Sea, would not have this magic; and I firmly believe it would be equally true of an Asiatic or African coast.

America remains essentially the country where one goes to seek one's fortune, the country for which one has left one's own country. A coun-

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try which one visits in passing, or which one is going to inhabit a few years at most, has not this solemnity of a promised land, on the approach, or this aspect of a double enigma proper to countries where many men come to live forever, or for a long time: the enigma of what the continent hides behind its visible fringe, and the enigma of the life it will provide them. Even today, now that the colonization and the clearing have become prosaic industrial operations, devoid of all adventure, the first glimpse of the American coast in the distance awakes in many of us irrational, anachronistic, adventurous souls, and moves us curiously; but, without doubt, to feel this, one must travel otherwise than as a tourist—must have a little uncertainty in one's life, and find one's self among people for whom the passage from the old continent to the new is a poignantly important throw of the dice, on which they have staked almost everything!

One of the proud predictions heard and read

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"BUT THE SOIL WAS STILL COVERED WITH A CHAOS OF TRUNKS." A CLEARED FIELD READY TO BE MADE INTO FARM LAND.

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most often on Canadian soil, is that the twentieth century will be “Canada’s century,” as the nineteenth was that of the United States. It is, doubtless, in drawing towards Quebec or Montreal that one recovers most easily and most exactly the state of mind of the *déracinés* who saw New York Bay open before them a hundred years ago. Those who, approaching that city today, watch the Statue of Liberty and the mass of the “sky-scrappers” loom up, can have very different impressions only, because the first aspect offered them by America is that of one city among others, and no longer the primitive, striking aspect of the empty country they are going to reclaim and to fill.

The ship ascending the Saint Lawrence, on the contrary, nears the shore on arriving at Rimouski, which is the first landing after Liverpool and the only one before Quebec. A little wooden tug, whose hull is extraordinarily massive and its prow singularly shaped to enable it to navigate in winter on the river filled with

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floating ice, comes, in midstream, to take the few passengers landing here. Of the city itself, which is hidden by an island, and of minor importance moreover, we see only a steeple and an indistinct mass of red, and brown-roofed houses; but this southern shore remains near and visible for a long time after our departure. A railroad line follows it, not far from the river. The strip of land bounded by this line and the river, is strewn with villages, collections of wooden houses in neutral tones, the browns predominating—houses always grouped about a pointed spire, but seeming, nevertheless, to stretch out deliberately, to attempt to bind the villages together, to make a good showing, and to fill up a little the empty spaces of the over-big country. For, behind this chaplet of fishing and farming villages, is the peninsula of New Brunswick and of Maine, the most easterly, the nearest to Europe, of all civilized America, where, however, there are still expanses of several thousand square kilometers

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without railroads and roads—almost without habitations—and deep forests which men penetrate at wide intervals only, in the autumn, to hunt the wolf and the elk.

It is the northern coast which, however, when we approach it, gives the strongest impression of a country scarcely tamed, still empty and wild. Perhaps the imagination counts for something in this—the recollection that, on this side, there is no longer any real civilization, any city deserving the name, nothing but here and there a few groups of houses timidly assembled, a few lost posts at the bends of the rivers and, farther still, nothing but the wigwams of the last Indians, scattered in the least inclement corners of Unguava and Labrador.

However, the part played by the imagination is not necessarily great, and its task is easy. Here and there this northern coast rises sheer up from the river in a series of rounded hills three-quarters covered with pines. The rock sometimes shows through the earth, but there

are only a few precipices or escarpments: everywhere simple, severe lines, ample enough to keep the forest skirts which cover them from changing their profile; everywhere browns and sombre greens: the brown of the bare earth, the brown of the close-ranked tree-trunks, the sombre green of their foliage; and other neutral tones, too, of vegetation which has been sombre in colour and line, even in midsummer, and which is now fading or growing still darker.

From time to time, with a sort of surprise, are seen houses. Here is one halfway up a hill-side, another on the water's edge, five or six are assembled in a fold of the ground; and, apparently, about their walls, stretch cleared spaces which must be fields. Yet between houses or groups of houses, there are several miles of steep slope, a deep valley, or a rounded summit—often a bit of forest that would have to be skirted—and one's eyes begin to seek—generally in vain—the rudimentary roads which should, nevertheless, unite them to each other or unite



A HOUSE BETWEEN PÉRIBOUKA AND HONFLEUR. "BUT THEY WERE STILL MORE PRIMITIVE."

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them to something, facilitate their approach for men from elsewhere. Then suddenly one fancies one sees the river lined with an icy crust, obstructed with heavy, serried blocks of ice floating down the current, the slopes covered with the deep winter snow; and the presence of these isolated houses, the existence of the people who live in them, become, for us men of the teeming countries, things almost inexplicable, pathetic.

All day long our ship ascends the river, approaching sometimes one shore, sometimes the other, to follow the line of deep water. This channel, by which all the Canadian traffic passes seven months in the year—the seven months during which the river is navigable—is marked with a care and a precision which constantly recall its importance. It is an uninterrupted chaplet of fires and of buoys; and yet, when the fog comes, in the afternoon, we must stop, drop anchor, and stay there an hour—a long hour of cold humidity, of impalpable opacity which the

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lugubrious appeal of the siren pierces every minute.

When a gust of wind disperses the fog and permits us to start again, the shores for a long time remain indistinct, drowned, in their turn, in this mist; and, soon after, night descends.

II

ON the steamer from Liverpool to Quebec —a steamer belonging to an English company and carrying English passengers almost exclusively, where everything reminds the traveller that he has just left an English port and is on his way to another port which seems as if it were only a monumental gateway opening on a vast English colony—French Canada and the race which inhabits it appear to be merely second-rate entities whose rôle is finished, weak, antiquated, imprisoned in the past.

On the deck, passengers ask each other: “Are you going West? Have you a long way to go from Montreal?” And all the replies are alike: “Long? Oh! About five days by rail! Where am I going? Calgary! Edmonton! Vancouver!”

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For them Quebec is but the portico, with archaic sculptures, through which they have to pass to reach the rough new countries, real Canada, the Canada which counts. All they have in their minds and on their tongues are strophes of the great epic of the West. The substantial, prosperous cities where there were but five huts ten years ago! So many bushels of wheat produced this year by lands cleared the year before! One hundred mines already opened, and only awaiting the coming of the railroad to yield up their ores!

The ship ascends the Saint Lawrence, arrives in sight of Quebec. We begin to distinguish the mass formed at the foot of the old fortress by the old houses of the *ruelles* of the *Ville Basse*. Steeples rise here and there among the roofs. When the ship makes fast, the porters who come on board show, beneath American soft hats, the good, moustached faces of French peasants. The passengers press to the rail and watch all this with an amused curiosity; and



A CLAY OVEN PROTECTED BY A ROUGH STRUCTURE OF BOARDS IS A COMMON SIGHT OF THE QUEBEC COUNTRYSIDE. WHILE THE BREAD WAS BAKING IN SUCH AN OVEN, MARIA SAT NEARBY AND DREAMED OF PARDISE.

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even those of them who are Canadians, see little more in this greeting by Quebec than a sort of spectacle which does not touch them very closely—a pantomime by a foreign company, in a foreign setting.

To the questions asked them by travelling-companions who see Quebec for the first time, they reply with a shade of disdain: “Yes! It’s quite a curious town! An old city! A French city: everything about it is French. . . .” And they hurry to catch the train which will take them to their own Canada, far from this foreign *enclave*; but this train will travel ten hours at full speed before leaving the *enclave* which their boat will already have traversed for twenty hours before reaching Quebec. It will leave on both sides dizzy expanses of territory which extend as far as the United States on the south, and Labrador on the north, and which form part of the *enclave*. This train will traverse Montreal, a city of five hundred thousand inhabitants, which, in spite of everything, is still more

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than half French. It will, across the whole of Canada and as far as Edmonton, at the gates of the Pacific, find sparse but tenacious groups of French-Canadians who remain wholly French-Canadians, even in their isolation, and will remain so. And the fecundity of this race is such that it maintains its positions, although it receives but an insignificant immigration. Its force of resistance to all changes—to those which Americanize as well as to those which Anglicize—is such that it keeps itself intact and pure, from generation to generation.

It manifests its will to clear and to cultivate, itself, all that part of its territory which still remains to be cleared and cultivated. Confronted with the foreign hordes which arrive, more numerous each year, it gives no sign of retreating.

The traveller, coming from France, who knows this and who, wandering through the streets of Quebec, reflects on this unwearying will to hold fast, looks about him with an acuteness of at-

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tention which seems to him almost a duty. And everything he perceives moves him: the narrow, winding streets which do not intend to sacrifice an iota to the rectilinear ideal of a new continent; the names which are displayed on the shop-fronts and which appear more intimately and more uniformly French than those of France, as if they had issued from the soil at an epoch when the race was purer: *Labelle—Gagnon—Lagace—Paradis . . .* the curious *calèches* which scour the streets and recall certain obsolete vehicles which still wear out their lives on the streets of little *sous-préfectures*.

The visitor regards the names of the streets: *Rue Saint - Joseph—Sous - le - Fort—Côte-de-la-Montagne*—and he remembers suddenly, with a start, that it is the immense curve of the Saint Lawrence which forms the horizon, and not the sinuous course of a little river of France. He hears about him the sweet French speech, and he is obliged to repeat to himself incessantly, to keep from forgetting it, that he is

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in the heart of a British colony. He sees on the face of each man, of each woman, he meets, the seal which proclaims them to be of the same race as himself; and a sudden gesture, an expression, a detail of dress or of bearing, gives birth in him to an acute sense of kinship. The sentiment which blends all the others, and which comes to him at length, is a profound gratitude to this race which, by maintaining its identity integrally through the generations, has comforted the nation from which it sprang and astonished the rest of the world—this race which, far from weakening or degenerating, seems to show, decade after decade, more inexhaustible force and eternal youth, face to face with the young, strong elements which hem it in and would like to reduce it.

The herds of English, Hungarian, Scandinavian immigrants may arrive, turn by turn, in the Saint Lawrence, to go and form one people in the gigantic smelting-pot of the West; the shadow of the British throne may



YOU HAVE A GOOD HOUSE THERE.

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spread over this country which belongs to it, at least nominally; the plains of Manitoba, of Saskatchewan and of Alberta may nurture with their tilth a hardy new race which will speak in the name of Canada as a whole and claim the right to choose and dictate its destiny—Quebec does not care!

Quebec, from the top of her hill, watches the barbarian hordes pass, without a shadow of envy and without a shadow of fear. Quebec receives the royal messages with a courteous tolerance. Quebec knows that nothing in the world can overwhelm the French garden which she has piously created on the rude soil of America, and that all the convulsions of the new continent would be incapable of troubling the deep, sweet peace which the French of old, its founders, had to bear away from the land of France, like a stolen secret.

IN THE STREETS OF QUEBEC

THAT Quebec is an historic city, the most interesting perhaps, historically, of North America, unique in its kind on that continent, a city to which young America comes piously to visit vestiges two hundred years old, just as old Europe goes piously to visit, at Rome, vestiges two thousand years old—everyone knows this; but it is also a more complex city than is willingly admitted.

The Americans and the western Canadians display, on this point, a trace of bias. It pleases them to make of Quebec a venerable ruin which is still standing by a miracle, to exaggerate the past life of the city at the expense of its present life. Even its neighbour, Montreal, which now numbers more than half a million inhabitants, as against Quebec's seventy thousand, often

IN THE STREETS OF QUEBEC

takes, in speaking of this latter city, a protective, slightly pitying tone—the tone in which “young city ladies” speak of their grandparents who have remained in the village. It is the “old capital,” the “old city,” and other expressions in which the adjective “old” often recurs, employed in a slightly ambiguous manner. It may be a mark of respect—it would be difficult to prove the contrary. When, however, we personify cities, it is always of women we think; and, among women, this constant insistence on the difference of age is not always regarded, I believe, as a sign of friendship!

Perhaps there is, in this case, a tiny resentment provoked by the fact that Quebec is still the capital of the province and the seat of the government. The people of Montreal will, no doubt, deny so petty a jealousy, and certainly it is better to believe them. Moreover, Montreal has very different concerns: among others, that of resolutely defending her position, as the “biggest city of Canada,” against her Ontario

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rival, Toronto, which is different in race, religion and language.

The other provinces, however, affect somewhat to regard Quebec as a museum curiosity, out of place in this century. Their Anglo-Saxon inhabitants, too, treat it as an "old city," with neither scorn nor enmity, and simply to designate the sole feature of the physiognomy of Quebec which has struck them.

If they come from Manitoba or from Alberta, for example—provinces which appear to become Americanized, little by little, under the influence of the very numerous immigrants from the United States, who come to settle there every year—they will see things with the same eye as the tourists from New York, Boston or Chicago, who come during the summer. The strangeness of narrow, often winding streets lined with houses which are not old enough to be architectural curiosities, but which are, nevertheless, old, and show it; the French names everywhere on the street-signs, on the shop-



"LAURA AND SAMUEL CHAPDELAINE." M'SIEU AND MADAME SAMUEL BÉDARD WITH WHOM LOUIS HÉMON LIVED, AND WHOM HE TOOK AS MODELS FOR LAURA AND SAMUEL CHAPDELAINE.

IN THE STREETS OF QUEBEC

fronts; the goods usually marked in French; the sounds of French speech about them—this is what they will naturally notice, and what will give them that impression of exile, of an excursion in a foreign land, which they will enjoy or feel as an affront, according to their temperament.

A Frenchman who comes directly from France, on the contrary, and who has not had time really to lose contact with the things of his country, will, in Quebec, note especially, not that which is French, but that which is not French.

Streets, usually neither paved nor even macadamized, lined with rudimentary boardwalks; electric tramways climbing incredible grades; the generally beardless visages of the French-Canadians, especially when they are young; the American cut of their clothes; the American shape of their round, soft, felt hats; their shoes, which are American also; the prices marked in dollars in the shop windows; the

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English words, intact or clumsily turned into French, occurring unexpectedly in French phrases—all these are details which will not fail to surprise a Frenchman, if he has taken literally those epithets of “old French city” which people coming from other countries than France apply to Quebec with complete sincerity.

So that the majority of the tourists who visit Quebec seem destined by the force of things to see really only half of it. Now it is precisely this double character of Quebec—French city grafted on the American soil—American life grafted on the old French stock—which renders it so strangely different from other cities.

Hardly landed on the quays of the port, one begins to feel the amalgam. The docks do not give the impression of being organized in a very modern manner, and no doubt the United States has much better to show. However, the train which comes to take the mail to carry it to the West, has already the gigantic cars which are the rule on American soil. The porters and the

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customs officials are bilingual, by which I mean that they employ French or English alternately, according to the need of the moment and, very often, mix them. On the vast covered pier, there would seem to have remained something of the heterogeneous crowds which have passed their first hours there, leaving the steamer. English, Germans, Swedish, Russian, Hungarian immigrants—one feels that the function of this pier is to receive nearly every day several hundred men and women of those countries, and to shelter them until there has been time to put a little order among them and their belongings, and ship them to their respective destinations. So far as four walls can be typical, this covered pier is typically American, since the new arrivals are sorted out on it like bales of merchandise.

Those of the passengers who have no further formalities to go through with, and need no aid, hail a porter, then a carriage; and immediately they believe themselves in France. That the

porter and the driver both speak French, is nothing; but one finds in them that affectation of alacrity, that demonstrative obligingness, which is rare in Anglo-Saxon countries, but which the workmen of other races cultivate carefully, half as a virtue, half as an incontestable right to a bigger tip. When, indeed, the moment to pay them arrives, their bargaining and their pathetic demands do not fail to produce the expected result.

If fortune is fairly kind to the new arrivals, they have taken a *calèche*. The *calèche* is a purely Quebec institution, perhaps the most curious object in the city's property-shop. It would be futile to attempt an exact description. Suffice it to say that it is a vehicle of antiquated aspect, infinitely older, as to type, than the oldest of the *fiacres* in a very small French town. It has four light wheels, a high foot-board, two rather uncomfortable seats facing each other, and often one of those indescribable doors which persist in staying neither open nor



THE VILLAGE OF PÉRIBOUKA. A LIGHT FALL OF SNOW. SAMUEL HÉDARD'S HOME IS THE SECOND HOUSE IN THE PICTURE.

IN THE STREETS OF QUEBEC

shut, and which, sooner or later, one must resignedly hold with one's hand in a position hardly more than a compromise. It is impossible to believe that *calèches*, of the Quebec type, are still constructed in our own day; or else, if so, then new *calèches* are, by some secret process, given the patina of an extreme antiquity before being allowed in the streets, hitched to a very old horse, driven by a very old *cocher*.

The *calèche* goes bumping through the Quebec streets which, in the autumn, are like quagmires. One looks curiously through the door. On leaving the wharves and the warehouses, there are several rudimentary grade-crossings, a railroad line which passes, as it were, in the middle of the street, and a long string of those enormous American cars, standing close by. Some yards further, the light falls on the sign of a closed shop, and we read: "*Eusèbe Ribeau, Marchand de Hardes Faites.*" A few more turns of the wheel: advertisements praise a rye

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whiskey, a brand of cigars, or some one of those cereal foods which abound in the United States. At a street corner a placard proclaims: "*Par ici pour l'élévateur,*" and the lift is seen climbing the hill in the distance. A young man standing on the curb of the wooden pavement chews a cigar, his hands in his pockets, his felt hat drawn over his eyes, revealing only the lower half of his smooth-shaven, bony Yankee visage; and, just when the impression of Americanism becomes acute, stifling other impressions, the *calèche* slows down, stops. The *cocher* says cordially: "*C'est icitte, Monsieur!*" You get out and see before you, in a single glance, the street-sign, indicating the name of the square, and the hotel sign: "*Carré Notre-Dame-des-Victoires,*" "*Hotel Blanchard, Maison Recommandée.*"

To note all these contrasts of detail, one after the other, is evidently a somewhat childish pastime; but it would be more superficial still to see but one of the aspects of Quebec and to

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deduce from it the complete, definitive character of this unique city, where two modes of life mingle and marry like two aromas.

The streets of Quebec . . . There are, naturally, five or six of these streets which all tourists, without exception, visit conscientiously, because they are mentioned in the guides, and because they are the ones which corroborate that easy, incomplete description of Quebec as an "old French city," encountered everywhere.

All the streets of the *Ville Basse* are narrow and somewhat winding, in the first place. Certain of them have no other merit. The houses which line them are commonplace: old façades in which the stone is a bit weather-worn, the wood a bit worm-eaten, and behind which is divined a framework of great beams hewn from trees felled with an ax at an epoch when steam sawmills did not cover the Canadian soil, as they do today. Here and there this relative antiquity is apparent enough to give an exterior

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a marked character; but there are seen neither pointed roofs nor overhanging storeys, and a traveller who recalls certain European cities he has visited, will doubtless smile at hearing Quebec spoken of as an “old city,” on the strength of these vestiges alone.

They suffice for Americans, however. Those of them, at least, who have not yet “done” Europe, are amazed to see streets which are not perfectly straight or thirty feet wide, and in which each house manifests a fine spirit of independence with respect to the general alignment. The majority of these visitors, were they sincere, would confess their complete contempt. A minority only, preferring picturesqueness to cleanliness, to convenience and to hygiene—for the cities they do not themselves inhabit!—honestly admire the alleys of Quebec.

A Frenchman will be more particular. He will, doubtless, be pleased to find almost familiar aspects in a distant land; but, in order to love the streets of old Quebec, and to derive



THE SCHOOL OF PÉRIBOUKA AND THE MONUMENT TO LOUIS HÉMON ERECTED
BY THE SOCIETY OF ARTS, SCIENCES AND LETTERS OF THE PROVINCE OF
QUEBEC.

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vivid impressions from them, he will, failing other American towns, have to wander through the streets of new Quebec.

For Quebec is a very live city, and is still growing. That is what must not be forgotten. It is growing in three ways: by the normal increase of its population; by the migration of the rural population to the cities, which is beginning; finally, by the deposit of human alluvion, inevitable in a city through which pass two-thirds of the Canadian immigration, or more than two hundred thousand men and women each year. And a parenthesis opened here on this present and future development of Quebec, will save our having to return to it later.

The normal increase of the population is in proportion to the birth-rate, which, as is well known, is considerable. The fame of these French-Canadian families, numbering twelve and fifteen children, has reached Europe, and it has sufficed to dismiss, once and for all, the hypothesis which has been advanced with re-

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gard to depopulation, namely, that our race is, in itself, unfertile.

The second cause of the growth of Quebec, applicable equally to all the other cities of the province, may surprise the European who still thinks of Quebec as a purely agricultural country, where the problem of slow concentration in the cities does not exist. It is, however, a fact that, in spite of the heavy birth-rate, the rural population augments in only very feeble proportions in the two oldest provinces of Canada, Quebec and Ontario. From one census to another, it is remarked that the gain has been principally in the cities. The French-Canadians of the country districts begin already to uproot themselves, either to swell the half-million inhabitants of Montreal or to concentrate about other, smaller cities which begin, equally, to become manufacturing centres; or, finally, to cross the frontier and to settle in the United States. This movement will, perhaps, be checked in part, but it already exists.

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Finally, there is that other reason for growth, which Quebec owes to its situation, and this would suffice to render ridiculous the bias of the western Canadians, who like to consider the “old French city” as a stagnant town, its rôle finished. All that part of the Canadian immigration which comes from Europe—and it is much the most important—passes by the Saint Lawrence; and, on the Saint Lawrence, Quebec is the first halt and the first city worthy of the name. The steamers continue afterwards, it is true, as far as Montreal, and Montreal seems to believe itself the natural terminus of the lines of navigation. This is not quite sure. The course of the river is very irregular above Quebec. In certain places relatively narrow and deep, it widens in others to lakes sown with shallows, where the least error in steering means going aground. Hence the very high maritime insurance rates on the vessels ascending the river. These vessels tend to increase their tonnage from year to year, as this branch of trans-

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Atlantic commerce comes to assume greater importance. When they have attained the dimensions of the biggest ships today running on the New York line, the companies to which they belong will have to choose between two things: either remaking the Saint Lawrence or else going no farther than Quebec. It is the story of Nantes and of Saint Nazaire over again, there as elsewhere. So that the "old city," of which the West, and Montreal itself, speak with pitying indulgence, may well be able to awake some day from its long sleep, with its glorious memories, and resign itself to becoming the great port and the great warehouse of Canada—to acquiring wealth after honour.

While awaiting this renascence, Quebec is none the less already a live city, growing and spreading; and those of us who come from older cities than Quebec, or from European countrysides inhabited, cultivated, and pierced with roads for many centuries, would find it profitable to leave aside, for one day, our red-covered

IN THE STREETS OF QUEBEC

guides and to wander aimlessly through the new streets which Quebec is casting about her, or prolonging.

The plain which extends on the other side of the Saint Charles River, for example. We have climbed from the *Ville Basse* by the *Côte-de-la-Montagne* and the *Rue Saint-Jean*, which is the principal street of Quebec. The electric trams pass every twenty seconds, with clanging gongs, between stone houses, between the hat shops and clothing shops, the book shops, the department stores—all the monotonous apparatus of universal civilization. Also, the people who pass wear the inevitable livery. The women's dresses are too evidently "Paris models," though not very recent, perhaps. The men's clothes are usually in the American style, English sometimes, with here and there a purely French note. All have the air of people accustomed to live uniquely in modern houses or in the streets, far from every contact with the rude soil, which is forgotten.

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If, however, we take, at random, one of the side streets, then, within two hundred yards, everything changes. The stone houses have suddenly disappeared, leaving the impression that they were scarcely more than a long façade, a stage-setting. In their stead, stand rows of wooden houses, with clapboarded walls. Sometimes their owners have forgotten to paint them, or else the paint has disappeared, cracked by the summer sun and the intense cold of winter, flaked by snow or rain. The bare wood shows, as rude and primitive as left by the ax or the saw. The pavements, when they exist, are also made of rough planks, laid on the ground. The roadway, in this rainy season, is such a slough that, here and there, board foot-bridges have been carried across it. Between the rudimentary houses and the rudimentary pavements, this "street" descends the flank of the hill on which Quebec is situated, at a twenty per cent grade, to the river-side quarters.

The civilization above seems to reproduce



PÉRIBOUKA FERRY WHICH CARRIES MEN AND WOMEN TO CHURCH.

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itself at the bottom of the slope. We find there the trams and the stone houses; but, farther on, the plain begins and, once we have crossed the Saint Charles River, by a primitive bridge, we find again the wooden houses, more rudimentary still, placed farther apart, the wooden pavements, more crudely constructed, the roadway which, little by little, seems to become a simple trail traced on the virgin soil. A suburb; but a suburb felt to be skirting complete savagery.

The carriages which pass are American “buggies,” with four slender wheels of equal size, or else covered vehicles of an analogous type, but ruder. Their wheels are muddy to the axles. The horses are covered with dirt to the chest. Many are driven by men who can only be peasants: they have the terribly simple, obstinate visage of those in strife with the soil. And they are the visages of French peasants. The resemblance escapes sometimes, but it is perfectly perceptible: familiar faces under the

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dented felt hats or the caps, familiar silhouettes, even beneath the American ready-made clothes with broad, padded shoulders. They drive their horses along the wretched road, without dreaming of complaining, for they have never known a better one. Perhaps, even, this road appears to them excellent compared with the simple Indian trail it will become farther on, scarcely several miles from Quebec, long before they have reached home.

The city disappears already. It is the country which begins—not the polished, well-groomed country of our western Europe, but simply the soil, without disguise, merging insensibly into the true country of the north, scarcely scratched here and there, where the habitations are like islands strewing the barbarous expanse.

And, little by little, we forget the houses and the roads, and it is of the race we think: of the race which came to graft itself here, so far from home, so long ago, and which has changed so slightly! Coming from French countrysides,

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the first to settle here in this country which it has opened to the other races, it had to undergo, at first, the profound influences of remoteness, conditions of life radically different from those it had known until then—a new little nation which had to be built up slowly in a corner of a great empty continent. And scarcely did this nation repose on solid bases, when there began the arrival of foreign throngs, the invasion of the cohorts jostling each other to pass through the breach already made. Legally, the British suzerainty, actually the ever-increasing influx of the immigrants of all nations, who ended by constituting a definitive majority—that is what French Canada has undergone. How has she undergone it? How has she resisted the impress?

One can then come back to the streets of old Quebec to seek an answer. These streets, with what they show, take on a different aspect, or rather, a different sense, when we return from the suburban trails where the gulf existing

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between this country and the countries of
Europe has been made tangible.

And one promptly becomes aware that all those details which, at the first glance, strike a Frenchman as being marks of denationalization, are, without exception, superficial, negligible. The dress? One must indeed be morosely inclined to reproach the French-Canadians with not having constantly followed, during the two hundred years they have been here, the diverse fashions which have succeeded each other in France. Their city youths have adopted, quite naturally, and without the least trace of affectation in their case, the Anglo-Saxon garb which spreads more and more, even on French soil; and shall they be reproached with not having understood the beauty of velvet waistcoats and flowing cravats? As to the country-folk, their costume is, necessarily, during five months of the year, a costume which can have no equivalent in France, since its function is to protect them against the in-



THE CHURCH OF PÉRIBOUKA.

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tense cold; and the rest of the time their clothes are the peasant's working clothes, which are much the same everywhere.

The monetary system? French Canada could scarcely revolt against the rest of Canada for the sole purpose of giving itself the present French system of francs and of centimes which, moreover, did not yet exist at the epoch when the French stock of Canada took root. Out of the Canadian-American system of dollars and cents, it promptly made something which is peculiarly its own, by naming the dollars "*piastres*," and the cents "*centins*," or "*sous*."

A jingo, freshly landed from the steamer, will, perhaps, stop before a shop window displaying suits of American design, the price of which will be indicated by a figure preceded by \$, and he will shake his head with a somewhat comic sadness, reflecting that those who called Quebec a "French city," inhabited by Frenchmen, lied; but, before he turns away, a group of

Quebecois will stop behind him, and he will hear them talking: “*Des belles hardes, ça!*” “*Ouais! Regarde ce capot-là, donc, à quinze piastres!*” And our patriot will go away entirely consoled, his ear retaining, for a long time, the music of the French words and the accent of the soil.

If we take, in turn, other exterior manifestations of the intimate soul of French Canada—those thousand details which are, all told, the only things on which one can meditate the first days without absurdity—the impression remains the same. There has, doubtless, been a logical evolution, different from the evolution which has taken place, during the same period, on the French soil, and perhaps even along parallel lines; but there has not been a revolution, and the traces of assimilation, of an impress left by another race, are very hard to find. The British suzerains, having had the delicacy to impose nothing of their mentality and of their culture, have been equally incapable of causing any-

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thing to be accepted by persuasion. The French-Canadians have borrowed their language, to make use of it when it pleases them, for their own advantage. For the rest . . . it does not seem to have occurred to them that they could find much which was worth borrowing.

The streets of old Quebec are a witness. Going farther into French Canada, one will find that the external traits, recalling the mother-country, become rarer and rarer, and often disappear, and one might be tempted to believe that whatever is French on the American soil was disappearing at the same time. For fear this appearance should, from the first, create a false impression, Quebec keeps intact the ancient, precious setting of the *Ville Basse*. It is not a simple copy of an old French city—and we should rejoice thereat—but distinctly a Canadian city, already, and its alleys are indeed the sisters of the broken roads which turn into trails in the almost empty country. Only, these alleys display a sort of obstinacy in showing, once and

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for all, and by a hundred evident signs, from what country came the men who created them, who have since then pursued their task, and who have scarcely changed.

ON THE TERRACE

A WIDE board boulevard, clinging to the hill on which Quebec is situated, just below the summit. Higher up, there is little more than the talus of the old fortress. Lower, the steep slope descends. At the foot of the hill, the *Ville Basse*, all huddled up, squeezed between that insurmountable slope and the river. Seen from this height, the Saint Lawrence appears narrow and the southern shore close at hand. The collection of houses there is Lévis, a suburb of Quebec, which the absence of a bridge raises to the dignity of a separate city. The two banks are cut into slips where steamers make fast. They are lined with sheds at several points; and these sheds, these steamers, other smaller steamers going back and forth incessantly between the two shores, give the illu-

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sion of a really great modern port, animated with commercial life.

When, however, one turns and looks a little farther to right or to left, things again assume their true proportions, and one perceives that it is the city which is the accessory, not the river. This stream has not the subjected, humiliated look of water-courses which have traversed cities, great of old, so long that they have lost their own personality and their independence, and have become something still more hideous than the moving sidewalks of urban traffic.

The Saint Lawrence, at Quebec, has never known the quays which brutalize water, or the bridges which humiliate it. For the wooden stockades, bordering its bed here and there, are discreet and almost invisible. Besides which, wood harmonizes naturally with water and never has the insulting prison-wall look of stone quays. Outside the town, and on both sides of the river, the banks promptly resume their primitive character: flat and marshy below,



AFTER THE CHURCH SERVICE AT PÉRIBOUKA. THE PEOPLE GATHER TO TALK
OVER AFFAIRS.

ON THE TERRACE

beyond the Saint Charles River, steeper above, especially on the north shore, where the hill of Quebec is prolonged by a ridge whose flank, for some distance, remains close to the water. So near Quebec, these banks of the Saint Lawrence are still intact, almost virgin, and precisely as they must have been three or four centuries ago, when the canoes of the redskins were the only boats the river had known. Nothing else has been changed; and, on both sides, the soil thrusts down into the water irregularly, as it pleases.

One divines this from the top of the hill, from the overhanging terrace; and the narrowness of the limits to which the human impress has extended, joined with the width of the free river, leaves the impression that here is, indeed, a new country, that man has merely scratched its surface, and that Quebec itself, the "old city," is, after all, only a very young person, as the life of cities is commonly reckoned.

And yet . . . at the foot of the hill the

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disorder of the incongruous houses of the *Ville Basse*, the narrowness of the alleys which separate them and which, from above, resemble unfathomable crevasses; the Champlain Market where housewives wander without haste, always ready to loiter, forming dark rings about the brighter spots made by the vegetables displayed for sale—how little all that is “New World!” How many French cities there are where market-day brings punctually around a scene in every respect similar to this one, viewed, for example, from the top of a steeple! And one divines that the good woman haggling over cabbages with a peasant in hunting waistcoat and black cap, employs precisely the same words, the same gestures and the same sneers which would be employed, at this same hour, by a woman of the same name—another Dame Gagnon, or Normandin, or Robichot, who also buys her vegetables in the market-place of a *chef-lieu d'arrondissement*, somewhere “back home.”

ON THE TERRACE

And suddenly the young Quebec, Quebec the American city, Quebec hemmed in closely by the wild country, takes on, in the eyes of a man from the great cities, that aspect of ancient calm, of respite, of a slightly somnolent peace, which little provincial cities have, in the morning, for Parisians who arrived by night.

The steamers which, with their going and coming, bind the two banks together, Quebec and Lévis, are all provided with a gigantic walking-beam which rises high above the deck and sways ceaselessly—moved, apparently, by two rods fixed to its extremities and sinking into two wells, fore and aft. This may be very mechanical and very modern; but it is, above all, funny for profane eyes, and altogether similar, at a distance, to ingenious street toys. This does not prevent their having the important, busy air of steamers, and making a lot of noise with their whistles or their sirens every time they cross the calm stretch of water, as if bound on a bold adventure. One of the steamers moored

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in the port answers them. Then the wind, driving before it the grey clouds, sweeps away these importunate noises also and brings, in their stead, a sound of church-bells.

The bells of Quebec. . . . One is suddenly aware that their voice was there from the beginning, that it has never ceased to make itself heard. Shrill peals came from Lévis, above the Saint Lawrence, other peals rose from the *Ville Basse*, clearer and yet as unequal as the surf, and still others came from the *Ville Haute* and from the distant quarters. Together, they formed a voice which rose and fell with each breath of the wind, dying away to rise anew after several seconds, obstinate and grave.

There are people who claim to have heard all sorts of delicate and moving things in the voice of the bells. Listening to them honestly, one usually perceives only a dogged repetition, a lesson endlessly repeated, with solemnity, a persistent affirmation which will brook no debate: ". . . It is so! . . . It is so! . . . It



AT THE PIER OF PERIBOUKA AFTER THE CHURCH SERVICE. LOADING UP
WITH PROVISIONS WHICH HAD ARRIVED BY BOAT.

ON THE TERRACE

is so! . . ." each new clang of the tongue driving the dogma a little deeper into heads, like hammer-strokes on a nail. And the immutable monotony of their appeal leaves an impression of infinite age.

Trailing mists, ceaselessly torn and mended again by the wind, come from the Gulf like a cortège. Passing low above the river, they form a procession of opaque spots between which, however, are distinguished, here and there, the surface of the water or bits of the southern shore, which seem drifting away. Then, when these clouds have passed, it is seen that the air has lost its transparency. Darkened, striped with falling drops, it tones down everything, without blotting anything out, and Lévis, the Saint Lawrence, Quebec itself, blend in a great, grey, indistinct setting which breathes at once melancholy and serenity. And the sound of the bells continues to pierce the grey mist.

On the river, the little steamers with their gigantic, comic walking-beams, keep on coming

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and going, whistling and groaning importantly. The Champlain Market is now nothing but a roof of umbrellas, the *Ville Basse* grows sad, paltry and commonplace under the shower; but the bells do not cease for an instant to reply from one shore to the other, and from one end to the other of this city which belongs to them. Their voice bears witness that Quebec has learned nothing and forgotten nothing, that it has kept miraculously intact the punctual piety of other days. That is, perhaps, why Quebec takes on this physiognomy of an ancestress, in the eyes of the pagans from overseas. She is old like the old cathedrals, like the Latin prayers, like the venerable, fragile relics in their reliquaries. Hers is the age of the ancient rites which she brought with her on a new soil, and has faithfully observed.

But, in honour of what saint did the bells of Quebec sound in unison that day?

FROM QUEBEC TO MONTREAL

AN unpretentious station, long wooden quays and, on each side, the trains of the Canadian Pacific, waiting. The station buildings hide Quebec. Men—English- or French-Canadians—arrive without haste, carrying a single valise, chewing a cigar, and settle down anywhere, as if they were boarding a suburban train. A group of girls take a noisy, silly farewell, punctuated with laughter, of a departing friend, so that this departure from Quebec is like all departures, and the juxtaposition of the two races merely recalls the habitual scenes at the Gare du Nord, or at Charing Cross, beside the trains between Paris and London. As soon as this train starts, however, the difference becomes perceptible and altogether striking.

The country traversed, in the first place. These are the suburbs of Quebec lining up,

T H E J O U R N A L O F L O U I S H É M O N

on both sides of our route, their wooden houses, whose new rusticity is astonishing after the timeworn façades of the old streets of the *Ville Basse*. Rudimentary grade-crossings, American fashion, leave a vision of rude carts with four tall wheels and, behind these carts, stopped just in time, rudimentary roads also, autumn-soaked, where the horses sink up to the hock and spatter themselves up to the shoulder. Then, with the perspective required, Quebec reappears, and the high hill of the fort, covered and surrounded with the houses of the past, keeps, as it shrinks into the distance, all its picturesque majesty. The places which we leave are almost never devoid of grace, and their slow disappearance on the horizon always lends them a touch of melancholy; but, in the case of Quebec, this grace and this melancholy are not merely subjective. They dwell immutably between her walls, and the silhouette of the city and of the fort persists and pursues a long time, like the reproach of a proud old town which has done



GOING HOME AFTER CHURCH ON SUNDAY.

FROM QUEBEC TO MONTREAL

more than its duty, and which this century, though owing it so much, seems to neglect.

When Quebec has disappeared, looks turn naturally to the immediate vicinity; and there, too, a hundred details remind the new-comer that he has crossed a sea wider than the Channel—that he is in America, in short.

The train is a vestibule train. That goes without saying. The Canadian railroads are, in the main, of recent date, almost newly born, and it is little likely that, free to order their rolling-stock to their liking, they would have had the fantastic idea of copying those blocks of sentry-boxes, placed back to back, which still grind on so many French or English lines. Nor, on the other hand, have they copied the type adopted in France for the corridor cars, or that amelioration of the imperishable sentry-boxes, which consists in simply adding to them a passage at the side.

The cars of the Canadian Pacific have not a single partition from one end to the other. A

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central aisle, seats for two, facing forward, on each side—this arrangement recalls, on a three times greater scale, the carriages of the various Paris and London subways. Only, one remarks immediately that, along the walls, and under the seats, run heating-pipes, encased in stencilled sheet-iron, and remembers that this is neither a kindly attention on the part of the company, nor a luxury, but, indeed, the prime necessity in this country. For, several weeks from now, these cars will continue to run, and will leave Quebec precisely as today, but behind a snow-plough, to traverse the country frozen and shrouded in white.

When this has been noted, one turns one's eyes anew to the long, continuous windows, as if expecting to see the first flakes already falling; and, with the aid of the imagination, no doubt, the character of the landscape declares itself and seizes the mind, revealing, in each of its details, a little of the dread solemnity of the countries with long winters. A stretch

FROM QUEBEC TO MONTREAL

of forest, though quickly traversed, is changed, by magic, into a corner of those other forests, not so distant, moreover, where the black bear ambles, growls, and sniffs, and where the wolves —the terrible wolves of children's imaginations —still howl. The surface of the Saint Lawrence, of which sudden glimpses are caught, makes one think of the great rivers of virgin water which, in winter, go to sleep in the ice, and where, in the spring, the caribou come furtively to break the thinning ice with their hoofs, and to drink. Finally, one amuses one's self by turning a long clearing to the north, which shows nothing but bare undulations, into the beginning of the great plains which stretch away to Hudson's Bay—earth plains succeeded by the great plains of the frozen polar seas.

Tricks of the imagination, no doubt, forged visions; but these visions are born with a singular facility, and they are almost free from ridicule, since, to each of them, corresponds a

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reality quite close, several days, almost several hours, distant.

Certain regions of Europe—perhaps of France, even—may offer aspects precisely similar to these; and yet, without any mental effort, one succeeds in convincing one's self that each of these aspects is typical, special to this country which is the advance guard of the American continent to the north, a country too great, too cold, too rude, for man to feel at his ease in for a long time, where he advances with precaution only, step by step, towards the dread mystery of the lands defended by long seasons of snow.

Thus the European—the Frenchman—who looks through the car window, has a strong sentiment of exile. He feels acutely the foreign character of the landscape, this double gravity of the country still almost deserted, almost savage, and of the threatening Septentrion. In these big American cars, he starts dreaming that this train—the daily western express—



"HERE IS A DOG WHO HAS COME TO BE PETTED TOO." "LOUIS HÉMON,
DURING HIS STAY AT PÉRIBOUKA, WAS RARELY SEEN WITHOUT HIS GREAT
CHUM, THIS DOG."

FROM QUEBEC TO MONTREAL

once it has passed Montreal, will go, at a single bound, to the great wheat-fields which are even more deserted, even newer; to the provinces and the cities whose names mingle the British consonances and the old Indian consonances: Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta; Winnipeg, Nee-pawa, Calgary; to Vancouver which opens on the Pacific and the Orient. . . .

And suddenly he emerges from his reverie and, while awaiting these barbarous names, he finds under his eyes names so familiar that he remains astonished by them at first, then moved. The names of the stations which pass by: they are: *Pont Rouge, Saint Basile, Grondines, Grandes Piles, Trois Rivières*. . . .

On the wooden quays, before the little stations built of clumsy planks, the people who get on or off, in front of the doors of the long American cars, exchange words of farewell or of welcome in a soft, drawling French; and one sees alert, engaging women, whose costumes are not, perhaps, those of the boulevards,

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but whose mien, whose way of dressing, and whose bearing cry out that they are French to the marrow, that they have kept everything of the women of our country, here, between the great river which, next month, will be nothing more than an ice-floe, and the margin of the profound, little known forests.

The train starts again. A newsboy comes down the aisle, selling American magazines, chewing-gum, cigars or candies. He offers all these things in a nasal Yankee voice, surprising to ears accustomed to the English accent; but then, to answer a sudden question, he stops, takes a familiar attitude, and his voice changes instantly.

“Ouais!” he says. “J’ai ben le ‘Soleil’ de Québec, mais point la ‘Presse’; je l’aurai point avant ce souer! Ben oui, M’sieu! Vous pouvez fumer icitte, pour sûr!”

He goes away, alternating, to hawk his wares, his Yankee drone and his savoury Picard or Norman peasant speech; and, in the midst

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of the wide, austere countryside, where the cultivation occurs at wider intervals, and often disappears altogether, the old names of France continue to follow, one after the other: *Pointe du Hac, L'Epiphanie, Cabane Ronde, Terrebonne. . . .*

Terrebonne! These stubborn peasants found that the glebe of the Septentrion responded sufficiently to their labour, and they remained there for two hundred years. Hardly have they modified, in defence against the homicidal cold, the traditional costume of the country whence they came. All the rest—language, beliefs, customs—they have kept intact, without arrogance, almost without reflection, on this new continent, amid alien populations; as if an innate naïve sentiment, which some will deem incomprehensible, had taught them that, to alter in the least detail what they had brought with them from France, and to borrow anything whatsoever from another race, would have been to decline a little.





